Failure of summer rains in Tamil Nadu 2026 – due to El Niño effect

Yes, the current failure of rains and the intense heat in South India are largely attributed to the **prolonged impact of El Niño**. While El Niño conditions are expected to transition to neutral by mid-2026, the lingering effects from the 2023–2024 cycle have significantly disrupted weather patterns this season. [1, 2, 3, 4]

Impact on South India (Summer 2024–2026)

The rainfall deficit in Peninsular India is the result of several interconnected factors driven by El Niño: [5]

- **Suppressed Pre-Monsoon Showers**: Between March and early May, South Peninsular India recorded a massive deficit in pre-monsoon rainfall (66–82% below normal in some areas).
- **Weakened Monsoon Winds**: El Niño warms the central and eastern Pacific, which weakens the moisture-laden trade winds that typically bring rain to the Indian subcontinent.
- **Extreme Heatwaves**: The 2023–2024 El Niño cycle contributed to 2024 being one of the hottest years on record. This increased evaporation worsens the water crisis in major reservoirs across Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- **Delayed Recovery**: Although a transition to La Niña is possible later this year—which usually brings better rains—the current summer has remained critically dry due to the "tail end" of the warming phase. [2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]

Regional Specifics

- Karnataka & Kerala: These states faced severe deficits during the 2023 Southwest monsoon, leading to low reservoir levels that summer rains have not replenished.
- Tamil Nadu: Traditionally a rain-shadow region during the Southwest monsoon, it relies heavily on the Northeast monsoon and pre-monsoon showers, both of which have been patchy under El Niño's influence. [5, 11]

- According to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), while El Niño is a natural cycle, its impacts, such as these severe dry spells, are becoming more intense due to long-term global warming. [3]
- Would you like to know the monsoon arrival dates for your specific city to see when relief might be expected?
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[1] https://www.aqi.in
[2] https://www.reuters.com
[3] https://www.hindustantimes.com
[4] https://theprint.in
[5] https://www.newindianexpress.com
[6] https://www.pib.gov.in
[7] https://www.chinimandi.com
[8] https://thedailybrief.zerodha.com
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